



Zone-Info!

The-Zone! newsletter, for local families with additional needs
www.The-Zone.org.uk

Issue 4

January - March 2015

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Get in touch

Chair

Nikki Smith
118 Fernhill Road,
Farnborough, GU14 9DR
Nikki@The-Zone.org.uk

Treasurer

Carol Bulman
07860 806 179
(please leave a short
message and she will
get back to you.)

Teen Zone

Carol or Nikki
(as above)

[www.facebook.com/
TheZoneASD](http://www.facebook.com/TheZoneASD)

Twitter: #The-Zone!

The-Zone! has a new committee!

Several members have agreed to join the committee and to volunteer to run some of The-Zone! sessions. If you attended the Mum's Night Out, you'll have seen Vikki in charge of it and the children's Christmas party was run by Danielle, Sam and Jenny.

We are in desperate need of more people to volunteer to help with the running of our After School Zone sessions on Wednesday's during term-time, Saturday Zones on one weekend a month and Fun Zones in the holidays.

There are some changes happening; Carol and Nikki are stepping back from the running of some sessions at The-Zone! - Danielle and Sharon have stepped up to take on the monthly Saturday Zone events and Jenny and Sam are going to do their best to keep the Wednesday's After School Zone events going until the end of March.

The LAST After School Zone! session will be on 25th March 2015.

Huge thanks to Janet Stubbings!

With the money that Janet raised for us, by being incredibly brave and abseiling down from the top of Guildford Cathedral, we have purchased a new laptop for our Zone sessions. It's a great spec for the gamers and we hope it will be well used

Facebook

On Facebook we have a page that is for anyone who is interested in what we do.

To join, go to www.facebook.com/TheZoneASD and click on the "Like" button.

If you are a parent of a child or young person on the autistic spectrum or with similar issues, then you are welcome to join our closed Facebook group (only members within the group can see what you post) at www.facebook.com/groups/TheZone2014

All of our Zone-In and Zone-Out events are always listed in the group too, so it's well worth joining if you can.



www.the-zone.org.uk

Our website is kept up to date, so please do check it and the calendar to make sure events are running as planned before you attend.

Events!

Zone-In! is based within the grounds of **Samuel Cody Specialist Sports College, Ballantyne Road, Farnborough, GU14 8SS**

At The-Zone! we have tea, coffee, juice and biscuits but donations of supplies are always welcome!
Parents/carers remain responsible for their children at all of our sessions & events.

***** Please encourage your child to tidy away whatever they've played with or return it to the room it came from. *****

Zone-In! sessions

This is the name for all sessions we hold at The-Zone! We will have all of our indoor equipment; games consoles (XboxOne, PS4, PS3, Wii's, Xbox360, handheld games; PSPs, PSvita, DSIs, 3DSs) laptops, Ipads, Android tablets, arts, crafts and beads, Lego, Duplo, wooden train track and HappyLand sets. We have plenty of tea, coffee, juice and biscuits. Make sure you check out the Facebook events page or the calendar on our website for the most up to date info on events.



Saturday Zone

One Saturday each month, 10.30am - 2.30pm. The cost is £2.50 per child and you are very welcome to bring along a packed lunch and stay for the whole session. We do not have the outside space at these sessions for the time being.

After School Zone

Every Wednesday after school during term-time, join us from 3 - 6pm. The cost is £2 per child. We do not have the outside space at these sessions for the time being.

Please note: the last After School Zone will be on Wednesday 25th March 2015.

Fun Zone

Wednesdays during half-term and school holidays, 10.30am—2.30pm. The cost will be £2.50 per child and you're welcome to bring a packed lunch with you. In the nicer weather we will have the outdoor space with the outdoor toys, a bouncy castle, go-karts & trikers too.



Hampshire funded activities!

Huge thanks to Hampshire Short Breaks funding as without their help we couldn't run these sessions!



Please remember our **Zone Rules** are available on our website - you are responsible for your children at all of our activities and you must supervise them at all times!

Gateway Cards

If your child lives in Hampshire or attends a Hampshire school and you haven't got a Hampshire Gateway Card please complete a form at www.hants.gov.uk/gatewaycard or ask us for a form at The-Zone! To view activities available across Hampshire to Gateway card holders, go to www.hampshiregateway.info Once you have your card, please let us know your Gateway card number.



Teen Zone!

Teen Zone-In!

These sessions are especially for those aged 11 years and over who want to come along and socialise with those who are a similar age. On one Friday each month, 6 - 8pm we will have all the Zone-In equipment, as well as the Hexbugs! You may bring 12+ rated games but they must be approved by a committee member FIRST. The cost will be £2 per child. Parents need to stay at these sessions but it's a great opportunity to talk to others who understand life with a teen on the spectrum. Please note: There WON'T be a tuck shop at the sessions, but you are welcome to bring snacks and drinks along with you (just nothing with nuts!)

Teen Zone-Out!

These events need to be almost completely self-funding activities (but there is some funding on its way!) To start 2015 the way we intend to continue, we have booked the following events for Teen Zone-Out fun but please do let us know if you have any other ideas for activities we should try - anything to get our teens to leave the house and even socialise! As always, if cost is an issue please talk to Nikki and we will try to help, but make no promises.

Teen Zone-In!

Friday 13th February, 6 - 8pm

Friday 13th March, 6 - 8pm

We'll be there, with all our usual equipment including some additional games that are 12+ rated.

You are welcome to bring your own snacks and drinks (but these have to be consumed in the main communal area).

Come and join us!

January Teen Zone-Out!

ignition racing

Friday 30th January 2015



February Teen Zone-Out!

wrestling match

Thursday 19th February 2015

7.30pm

at Princes Hall, Aldershot.

The price for this is the ticket cost:

Child ticket: £10

Free carer, per child with a diagnosis

Additional adult ticket: £15

Contact Nikki to book your places.

Carol & Gaye will be there on the night with your tickets.

March Teen Zone-Out!

laser-run

Friday 27th March 2015

7 - 8pm

at Laser-Run, Armstrong Way, Pyestock. We are off for an hour's exclusive use of the laser-run arena. There should be time for 3 or 4 battles (with a 5 minute break in between if needed).

Places are £10 per teen and are limited, so in order to guarantee your space payment must be made.

Useful info!

Disability Challengers

Our nearest play and youth schemes are based at their centres in Farnham and are great fun for those aged 4yrs+. Challengers also run family fun Sundays at the playcentre, for families to go and play, the cost is £4 per child and siblings are welcome.



On the last Saturday of each month Challengers host a fun swim session at Guildford Spectrum, the suggested donation is £2 per swimmer.

For more info, go to www.disability-challengers.org for details of everything Challengers do.

Great Opportunities! Club

GO! Club is open to those with mild to moderate learning difficulties and disabilities, along with their siblings. These sessions are to provide parents/carers with some respite time.

The Fleet club for those aged 5 - 19 years is held at Hart Leisure Centre, 2.30pm - 4.30pm, every other Saturday during term-time.

The Basingstoke club is for those aged 8 - 18 years and the Basingstoke Mini's is for 3 - 7 years. Both are held at the Everest Community Academy on alternate Saturday's, 2 - 4pm. The cost is £5 per child.

For more info, go to www.greatopportunities.org.uk or call 01256 636288.



In your local library...

Library concessionary card

If your child has a learning difficulty/ASD, they can have an Access Card from your local library, which entitles them to 2 free audio-visual items free of charge (music CDs, videos, DVDs etc.) and all their audiobooks on tapes or CD are free. Apply at your local library, with your child's Hampshire Gateway Card.

For more info ask in your local library or alternatively, go to

www.hants.gov.uk/library/librarymembership/library-concessionarymembership.htm



Boardmaker software

Boardmaker communication software is a flexible way of creating symbol-based displays, schedules and choice boards. These displays are incredibly useful for support for those on the autistic spectrum or with communication difficulties. You can get free access to the software and staff can offer support to use it. They also offer free printing and laminating. Boardmaker access is available in the following libraries:

Farnborough, Aldershot, Fleet, Basingstoke Discovery Centre and more - simply go to www.hants.gov.uk/boardmaker for more libraries, or to book your Boardmaker session online.

Alternatively, visit one of the above libraries to make an appointment.



Heathrow Airport Guide

Useful tips and resources for when travelling with a disabled passenger. The website also has links to other airports so, so it's worth checking out if you're flying anywhere soon: www.heathrow-airport-guide.co.uk/disabled-facilities.html



Merlin's Magic Wand charity

Merlin's Magic Wand believe in putting the magic back into the childhood of seriously ill, disabled and disadvantaged children by providing free tickets to Merlin attractions (Legoland, Thorpe Park, London Eye etc.) The eligibility criteria is that your child, aged between 2 and 18 years, with a disability or serious illness must either have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or be in receipt of a letter stating their condition in order for you to apply for tickets. Paperwork must be on headed paper which includes the organisations logo from an official source and have the child's full name, the child's date of birth, the child's medical condition or diagnosis or proof of foster care. For more information, go to www.merlinsmagicwand.org.uk (the online application form is only available after 12pm each day) - if you're not online or you would like help applying then come along to The Zone! You can call MMW on 01202 440060 but they only accept applications via their website.



** If you have received MMW tickets before they would rather you didn't reapply. **

Family Fund Grants

The Family Fund provides grants to families with disabled children. The Fund will consider any request on its merits but does have specific criteria about claiming. Several people have successfully applied for help with the costs of driving lessons, holidays, a new washing machine or tumble dryer and various other things! For more information, go to www.familyfund.org.uk or call 0845 130 4542.



Cinema Exhibitors' Association Card

This national card that is awarded to the child/person with a disability, that entitles them to one free ticket for a person accompanying them to the cinema. To be able to apply, the cardholder must have proof of one of the following criteria:

- Be in receipt of Disability Living Allowance
- Be in receipt of Personal Independence Payment
- Be a registered blind person

You will need to complete a form (this can be done online at the CEA website or you can print a copy out and post it to them), you will also need a passport sized photo and a proof of entitlement document. The card costs £6 and is valid for 1 year.



Radar Keys for disabled toilets

The National Key Scheme offers independent access by disabled people to around 7,000 locked public toilets around the UK.

If your child has a disability, you are entitled to use these toilets or if your older child is still in nappies or doesn't get much notice that they need the toilet and cannot wait in a queue.

They are available free of charge from your local council offices (you usually need to complete a form with all your details on it) if you have a diagnosis letter to show your child is entitled, or you can purchase one from The-Zone! for just £2.50 (this is great if you need a second key for another carer). Just ask us at any of The -Zone! sessions.



For more information about the scheme, go to www.radar.org.uk

Travelling safely!

We know that getting from A to B is never a simple thing, but here's a few things we've learned the hard way so you don't have to!

Special needs car seats

Britax Traveller Plus car seat is ideal for older children with special needs and suitable for children from 4 - 11 years (15 - 36 kgs). This seat is strapped into the car and then the child is strapped in with the 5 point harness and additional clip between the chest straps. Costing around £600. This will not contain a child determined to escape though. Available from various websites but here's one to get you started: www.incarsafetycentre.co.uk/product/traveller-plus or call them on 01908 220909.



Cybex car seats are also another route you could try - these car seat don't have a 5-point harness, but instead have an adjustable safety cushion. Suitable from 9 months to 11yrs and costing around £260. Might be worth looking into if the harness is part of the battle but we haven't heard how these fare with our escape artists. For more info, go to www.cybex-online.com/gb



Crelling harnesses and reins

Crelling sell "Houdini" harnesses which are made to contain children and adults whose challenging behaviour requires a certain degree of restraint. These have been used by several The-Zone! families and indeed Hampshire County Council use them on some school transport runs. The harnesses fasten around the seat in the car and make it practically impossible for the child to escape!

They also sell walking reins for older children and adults and harnesses that can be used to contain a child safely within their pushchair.

For more info go to www.crelling.com or give them a call on 01253 852298 - they are very helpful and will happily try to find the right product for your situation.

Additional ideas:

Chest strap clip - these can easily be bought and attached to the child's current car seat with a 5-point harness. They aim to deter your child from wriggling their arms free from the straps.

Buckle covers - these are designed to cover up the release button to stop little fingers undoing the main seat belt fastener.

BeltUpp - this is an additional strap designed to keep your child in place and upright in their group 2 car seat. These cost £17.99 and are available from www.beltupp.com

Special needs pushchairs

Maclaren Major buggy is an umbrella fold stroller that is suitable for older/larger children, up to the weight limit of 50kg/110lbs. The basic buggy and footplate costs £239 (0% VAT - see below for more info) inc free delivery - or take a look at the other packages available if you want accessories too. There is also now a vest harness, to try to help contain escapees.

www.maclarenmajorelite.co.uk

** 0% VAT : If you buy a pushchair for a child who needs it due to a medical condition, then you don't usually have to pay VAT. VAT relief is not just available for a child with a physical disability who is unable to walk, in fact most children in this situation would be eligible for equipment from the NHS, free! **

Ottobock Eco Buggy

If you need a pushchair for an older child, that still reclines, then the Ottobock Eco Buggy may be more suitable for your needs. It costs £400+ and more info is available at:

www.corporate.ottobock.co.uk

Dentists

If your child has special needs (including autism, learning difficulties, challenging behaviour etc) and they cannot cope with seeing an ordinary dentist, then you should be able to self-refer to the Solent NHS Trust to access the Special Care Dentistry Team. In order to access this service, you must be registered with a Hampshire GP.

You will need to contact the team on 023 8069 8677 or e-mail SNHS.CentralPointofReferral@nhs.net to request a referral form.



Teeth cleaning!

If teeth cleaning has become a battle, then here are some of the things other families have tried: using a variety of different toothbrushes; ones that light up, sparkle with glitter, electric ones that vibrate, musical ones or even the ones you place on the child's fingertip! Has anyone tried the Collis Curve toothbrush? www.colliscurve.co.uk it's an interesting design and seems to get good results!

Try using a timer to help show your child how long they need to keep going for; sand timer, digital timer, the coloured oil timers, anything that keeps the cleaning going for longer than 10 seconds!



As for toothpaste - try different brands, flavours, types;

we've heard good things about OraNurse - a flavourless, non-foaming toothpaste! www.oranurse.co.uk

What have you discovered that works?



For the sensory chewers

If you have a "chewer", be it their sleeves, fingers, random bits of tissue, paper or anything else they take a liking to, then it may be worth trying to find an alternative...

Chewigem - make all sorts of items from pendants, toggle tags, bangles; all designed to be chewed! Take a look at www.chewigem.co.uk

ChewyTubes - tubes and P's & Q's designed to cope with lots of chewing: www.chewytubes.com

Chew'lery - a necklace and bracelet that's made to be chomped upon, available from various websites, including www.specialdirect.com

Auto retract keyrings - these are a great way of keeping fidget toys or chew toys easily accessible but out of the way when they're not needed. These are available on Ebay for a reasonable cost.



Breakdown Service

With most breakdown services (the AA, RAC, Green Flag etc.) if you are a member and you tell them that you have your disabled child/adult in the car when you ring for assistance, they will make your call out a priority!

Road tax

If you are in receipt of the Higher Rate Mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance then you can apply for a road tax exemption certificate. You may have been automatically sent an application form for a Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) exemption certificate with the DLA award letter. For more information, go to www.gov.uk/financial-help-disabled/vehicles-and-transport

Disability Living Allowance

- things we've learnt over the years!

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is paid at different rates depending on how the disability affects your child/young person.

Rate	Care component	Mobility component
Higher rate	£81.30 a week	£56.75 a week
Middle rate	£54.45 a week	N/A
Lower rate	£21.55 a week	£21.55 a week

DLA has 2 parts called "components":

- care component: if your child need more supervision or help to look after themselves than their peers.
- mobility component: if your child can't walk or finds it very hard to walk, or get from A to B safely, in a reasonable time.

You could get a combination of both, or just one of the components.

Getting started:

The first step is to call and request a DLA claim pack 0845 712 3456. The form will be dated and give you six weeks to return it to them - if your claim is successful, they will then pay you from the date you requested the pack. It is possible to download the form at www.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children save it and complete it on your computer.

Make notes:

Sometimes it can help to keep a diary over a few days, detailing everything you do for your child - this can be quite an opener sometimes! As well as any incidents or meltdowns and what you had to do to calm the situation.

Use a draft copy or blank sheets of paper to work out what you want to write for each page.

If you need help with completing the form:

It's always good to go through the forms and complete the basics; your child's details, your details, bank information etc. Then work on the sections that you can; diagnoses from hospital letters, medication details, information from reports. Next tackle the questions, one at a time - you can always come back to a page and add more later. Once you have done your best, ask for help - get in touch with us, or whoever else you have found, to read through your completed form and see if add anything else crucial to it!

Key words & phrases to use:

- * Attention
- * Supervision
- * Guiding/prompting / repetition
- * Danger/risk (substantial/constant/significant)
- * Continuous support
- * Volatile
- * Vulnerability
- * Unpredictable
- * Challenging behaviour
- * "bad days" and "better days" (rather than good/bad days)
- * Consequences
- * Frustration / Stress
- * Hands on / touch (physical contact/intervention during the night)

Cerebra DLA guide

This is a brilliant resource that will give you things to think about when completing the form: www.cerebra.org.uk/English/getinformation/guides%20for%20parents/Pages/DLAGuide.aspx or alternatively, give them a call on 0800 328 1159 for a paper copy.

DLA: Severe Mental Impairment & disruptive behaviour

Severe mental impairment (SMI) refers to a child who 'has arrested or incomplete physical development of the brain resulting in severe impairment of intelligence and social functioning'.

The disruptive behaviour must be extreme, require physical restraint to prevent physical injury or damage to property and also require someone to watch over your child whenever they are awake.

Severe impairment of intelligence is determined in many ways. It can be through an IQ test or by assessing someone's 'useful intelligence' - the ability to function in a real-life context. As a rule, if your child is in a mainstream school, this won't be relevant but may well be if they attend a complex learning difficulties school.

Useful tips for DLA forms:

- ⇒ If you need more space, then write on extra sheets of paper and staple it to the form (make sure you also write your child's name, DoB and NI number each sheet too, just in case they become separated.)
- ⇒ Aids used can include PECS/visual schedules/prompts but always emphasise that you still have to encourage/reward/assist with the aids.
- ⇒ Time/issues in education don't always count unless your child has the same issues at home.
- ⇒ Send any additional evidence; paperwork from school, IEP's, reports etc. BUT make sure what you are sending supports what you are putting on your form!
- ⇒ If including examples, compare to a child of the same age without any difficulties.
- ⇒ Day time = 7am - 11pm
Night time = 11pm - 7am

Before you send the form back:

Always make sure you keep a copy; whether it's saved on your computer, photocopied or even use your phone to take a photo of each page - it means if it gets lost, you have a copy and when it comes to renewing your claim, you know what you put last time.

(If you need to go down the route of appealing a decision, do not worry, they will send you a copy of all of the evidence, including your completed form, on which they based their decision.)

Decision letter:

If you receive a decision that you are happy with - well done and we hope that it has a nice long date on it until you have to renew! Don't forget to see if you are entitled to claim any other benefits now too: perhaps Carer's Allowance, and it can increase your Child Tax Credits too. If you have been turned down or you aren't happy with the rates your child has been awarded, then the first step is to pick up the phone and talk to the DWP. They will arrange for another assessor to go through all the paperwork and reconsider your application. They will then notify you of that decision.

If you are still not happy, you can then appeal it; they will arrange a hearing for you to attend (it's usually better to do this without your child attending, unless you honestly think that the panel would benefit from meeting the child face to face). Although it is a more informal environment, it is still a legal procedure and therefore the panel is made up of a legal official, a medical expert (be it a paediatrician, GP or another professional) and usually a parent/carer representative. Do not be intimidated, just answer their questions honestly.

All of this can take time, but if you are successful, the payment will be backdated to when you began the whole process!

Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCP's)

From 1st September 2014, changes to the SEN law with the implementation of Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 mean that the new Education Health and Care Plans (also known as EHC Plans or EHCP's) will replace Statement of Special Educational Needs and post-16 Learning Difficulties Assessment (LDA) (section 139a/Moving On Plan).

If you apply for additional support for your child from September 2014 onwards, you will follow the EHCP process.

An EHCP is for those aged 0 - 25 years who need more support than the school are able to provide from within their own budget. It will require the education department, health authority and social care department to all work together to meet a child's needs. Personal budgets and direct payments can also be incorporated, but the funding for these still isn't great, so you'll need to be realistic with what you expect to get from them.

Families should be actively involved in completing an EHCP, indeed the "Our Story" section is for parents to complete with what they think needs to be included - make your words count!

The process...

Request for assessment

An EHC needs assessment can be requested by you, the school or college, or by a young person over the age of 16 but under the age of 25. Anyone else can also bring a child or young person who has, or may have, SEN to the attention of the local authority.

Proposal to assess

As soon as the request is received, a letter will be sent to you outlining the assessment process. There is a period of 25 days for you to send in comments on the proposal to assess. Within 6 weeks the local authority will decide whether or not to proceed with the assessment and inform you by letter of the decision and the reasons for it.

If the LA decide not to carry out an assessment you will have the right of appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (SEN and Disability).

EHC needs assessment

The local authority will seek advice and information from the following:

- Parents (in addition to your comments you can add any independent written advice you have.)
- Your child
- Early years setting, school or college (headteacher/principal, SENCo and teachers)
- Health care professional
- Educational psychologist
- Social care
- Any other relevant people (eg specialist teacher adviser, speech and language therapist, physiotherapist, occupational therapist etc)

You can attend any examination or assessment of your child.

The assessment should take no more than 20 weeks to complete.

Once all of the advice and comments have been collected about your child's special educational needs, the local authority will decide whether to write an EHC plan for your child. This provides a detailed guide to your child's special educational needs, the educational provision and other arrangements needed to meet them.

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Before a final EHC plan is written, the LA will send you a draft EHC plan and explain how you can give your views on it before the document is finalised. You will also need to consider which education setting you wish to nominate for your child. You have 15 days to comment on all parts of the draft EHC plan, but you can ask for a meeting with the local authority to discuss the draft EHC plan which then gives you a further 15 days after this meeting to send in any comments you have.

Useful pointers:

- ⇒ All of Hampshire's EHCP publications including the "Our Story" document:
www3.hants.gov.uk/sen-parentpublications.htm
- ⇒ The Hampshire Local Offer website:
www.hantslocaloffer.info
- ⇒ Copy of the new Code of Practice:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25
- ⇒ Hampshire's EHCP info:
www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/specialneeds/sen-home/ehc-assessment.htm
- ⇒ Surrey's EHCP info:
<http://new.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/special-educational-needs-and-disability-send/changes-to-send-support-in-2014>
- ⇒ Some brilliant, easy to read resources from SpecialNeedsJungle:
www.specialneedsjungle.com/sen-reforms/send-reforms-resources/
- ⇒ SOS!SEN information sheets:
www.sossen.org.uk/information_sheets.php
- ⇒ IPSEA letter to request EHCP:
www.ipsea.org.uk/what-you-need-to-know/ehc-needs-assessments/asking-for-an-ehc-needs-assessment
- ⇒ SEN Support Guidance document for education providers, but useful for parents to see too:
www.hantslocaloffer.info/en/SEN_support_-_Hampshire%27s_EHCP_Transfer_Plan
- ⇒ What else have you found useful? Tell us!

If your child currently has a Statement then they will be transferred over to an EHCP by 2018. This table provides the proposed transfer dates.

School year (as at Sept 2014)	Proposed academic year to transfer to EHCP
Year R	2016/17
Year 1	2015/16
Year 2	2014/15
Year 3	2017/18
Year 4	2016/17
Year 5	2015/16
Year 6	2014/15
Year 7	2017/18
Year 8	2016/17
Year 9	2015/16
Year 10	2015/16
Year 11	2014/15
Year 12	2016/17
Year 13	2015/16
Year 14	2014/15

For more information go to www.hantslocaloffer.info

Parent Partnership

This is Hampshire's impartial information, advice and support service; they will happily help you through the EHCP process. Simply call 01962 845870 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm) or e-mail: enquiries.pps@hants.gov.uk If you have a deadline, please make sure you tell them so that they can prioritise their cases.

Parent Voice - Independent Support services

Parent Voice have the contract to deliver Independent Support for Hampshire from within their Parent Voice service. You can contact the Independent Support services on 0300 300 8604 or by emailing independentsupport@roseroad.org.uk



118 Fernhill Road,
Farnborough,
Hampshire,
GU14 9DR

07860 806 179

info@The-Zone.org.uk

We're on the web:

www.The-Zone.org.uk

Make sure you let us
know if you move or
change your e-mail
address.

If you don't, we can't
get this newsletter to
you!

How to make a complaint

If you are not happy with the service you receive from Hampshire County Council, either through social care or the education department, there is a complaints procedure you can follow.

Social Care includes:

- Assessment of children and families' needs
- Family support
- Caring for a child with special needs

Education includes:

- Special Educational Needs (SEN) - assessment and support for parents (the Parent Partnership service)
- The educational psychology, welfare & behaviour support services
- Education other than at school, for pupils unable to attend school

The first thing to do is to raise the issue with a member of staff regarding the issue, or the manager if you prefer.

It is a good idea to put your complaint in writing; this avoids issues being missed or misunderstood.

There are 3 stages of the process, from raising the issue and it can be a drawn out process (even with their timescales to adhere to) but if you believe that things need to change then go for it and don't give up!

For more detailed info about the procedure, go to the Hampshire website: www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/contact-cs/cs-complaints.htm

Or take a look at the Hampshire complaints leaflet: www3.hants.gov.uk/complaints-leaflet.pdf

Local Government Ombudsman

If you are still dissatisfied after following the procedure, you can contact the Local Government Ombudsman: www.lgo.org.uk or call 0300 061 0614.

Local councillors and MP's

Several The-Zone! members have found contacting their local County Councillor or MP to be quite useful, to get some support for their case. You can find details of your local MP here:

www.parliament.uk/get-involved/contact-your-mp

And County Councillors here:

www3.hants.gov.uk/yourcountycouncillors/findyourcouncillor.htm

Social Worker issues

If your complaint is regarding your child's social worker, it may be worth making a complaint via the Health & Care Professions Council at:

www.hcpc-uk.org

This is the newsletter of The-Zone! a local charity (charity no. 1156806) for special needs families in North East Hampshire. Views expressed in this newsletter are for information only and reference to specific services or approaches to autism does not imply endorsement.

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